In our assignment for week 4, my S.M.A.R.T. goal was to improve our Economically Disadvantaged math students’ scores to 85% or higher in three years. This mark would not reach Exemplary but in three years I felt that this would be a great accomplishment and would result in a 13% increase in three years from 72% at the present time. (Texas Education Agency, 2011) My thought process was that if we focused on our Economically Disadvantaged students then out Hispanic, African American and Special Education students would also see a rise in scores since many students qualify as double and triple dippers.

Throughout this process, I was able to get different perspectives from my fellow classmates on our discussion boards in class and reading their replies to my comments. I am currently a high school math teacher and our students are always bringing the lowest scores in all four tested subject areas but I have noticed that our students complain about the following issue the most, “When are we going to use this in real life?” The number one complaint from our teachers is that students are not willing to put any effort on tests when there is nothing to make them try. My example for this is that Tenth grade tests are always scored worse than Exit level test. Why? Students must pass the Exit level testing to graduate where the Tenth grade test has no penalty for failure.

My professional development plan is geared to address the two major complaints. The first $3000 is to purchase restaurant or theater gift cards to reward students for making improvements in formal assessments and to reward those for doing well on tests. This issue is not addressed in the professional development part but is part of my action plan to improve our scores. The complaint by students is to be focused on in the staff development training. My goal is to have math teachers work with other content areas to find ways to integrate other subjects into the math curriculum and vice versa to show students the applications of the math they are learning. If students are to succeed in math, they must find ways to make math their own and see the outside application of it. Ellis states that “students can't help but think about math. It is embedded throughout the curriculum and throughout the school day” (Ellis, 2005). We will also look into integrating technology as much as possible to our targeted students to provide more one on one interaction and different points of view for the student. "What the technology can do is track the different approaches students are taking and give them guidance," says Ken Koedinger, director of the Pittsburgh Science of Learning Center. (Smith, 2008)

Through this process, I was able to get different perspectives from my fellow classmates on our discussion boards in class and reading their replies to my comments. Our district is always requiring us to analyze the data we have gained throughout the year, but even I was unaware of the total AEIS report and everything that it encompasses. I am still not an expert on it but I feel that I do have a better understanding of all the impossible tasks the state ask of educators.

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